

Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons

China Hands Choosing Sides in the Chinese Civil War

Standard: III. People, Places, and Environments
V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
VI. Power, Authority, and Governance
IX. Global Connections
X. Civic Ideals and Practices

Grade Level: 9–12

Objectives: The student will:

- Evaluate the role of the United States in China's Civil War
- Assess the observations made by the "China Hands"
- Correlate the success of the Chinese Communists with the "Red Scare" in the United States
- Comprehend the trials and tribulations of a diplomat

Time: 1–3 class periods

Materials: Documents: **1943** *The Cairo Conference*
1943 *A Growing Rift in China*
1944 *Our First Impressions are Extremely Favorable*

Resources: *Photograph: The Cairo Conference*
Background Information: China Hands and the Dixie Mission
Timelines: World War II and the Early Cold War
Map: China, 1945

Access to biographies of John Service:

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_S._Service
- <http://www.oldkewgardens.com/ss-maplegrove-0430.html>
- <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/coldwar/interviews/episode-6/service1.html>
- http://www.usdiplomacy.org/history/service/history_therole.php

Exercises: *China "Hands" Outlines* (Note: Cut & assemble prior to class)
Photos of Key People
China "Hands" Comments Answer Key

Materials: Scissors
Tape
Craft (popsicle-type) sticks

Procedures:

Activity 1: The Cairo Conference

- 1.** Provide or project the photograph of the Cairo Conference.
- 2.** Have students identify the men in the photograph. (Chiang Kai-shek, FDR, Winston Churchill).
- 3.** Ask these questions:
 - a.** Why were these world leaders meeting in 1943?
 - b.** What interests do they have in common?
 - c.** This was a secret meeting. Why were these leaders so concerned about maintaining privacy at this time?
 - d.** Which countries might they have avoided telling about the meeting?
- 4.** Distribute copies of document, *The Cairo Conference*.
- 5.** Discuss the intent of the Cairo Conference.
 - a.** What was decided about Japan's status after the war?
 - b.** Explain the relevance of Chiang Kai-shek's presence. What impact does this have on the Chinese Civil War?
 - c.** How would Mao Zedong react to news of this meeting?

Activity 2: The China Hands

- 1.** Provide information or explain the Chinese Civil War to students, if background information is necessary.
<http://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/ChineseRev>
- 2.** Distribute copies of the resource, *China Hands and the Dixie Mission*.
- 3.** Discuss the purpose of the Dixie Mission and the roles played by the China Hands.
 - a.** Describe the job assignment given to the China Hands.
 - b.** What difficulties did the diplomats encounter with the politics of this era?
- 4.** Distribute documents, *A Growing Rift in China* and *Our First Impressions are Extremely Favorable*, to all students.
- 5.** Allow time for students to read the documents which are first-hand reports from diplomat John Service.
 - a.** Describe John Service's attitude and mood regarding his assignment to Yenan.
 - b.** What were his impressions of the Communist Border Region?
 - c.** How does he feel about Mao Zedong?
 - d.** Do you think Service became a Communist or just was impressed with the everyday workings of the Chinese Communist Party?
- 6.** Arrange students in pairs or however many are needed for 10 groups.

7. Provide each pair/group with one of the China Hands. If prior assembly has not been done, students should cut out the hand outline and glue the craft stick to the **BACK** of the hand.

8. Provide students with the resource, *Photos of Key People* (groups can share copies)

9. Have students read the statement on each “China” hand and decide who would have made the statement. Students may refer to the documents and reading, *Background Information: The China Hands and the Dixie Mission.* (Note: Refer to *China “Hands”—Comments Answer Key.*)

Choices include:

- John Stewart Service
- Ambassador Patrick Hurley
- Chiang Kai-shek
- Mao Zedong
- Franklin Delano Roosevelt
- Ambassador Clarence E. Gauss

10. Have students glue or tape the picture of the person who made the comment on the back of the China “hand.” Teacher should rotate among groups to assist if any are off-track.

11. When all groups have completed the task, have one person from each group take the “hand” to the front of the room. All students should stand in a line facing the class. Each should hold up his/her China “hand” so that the quote is visible. Do **not** show the picture side at this point.

12. Have another student from each group read the quote as it is held aloft by the fellow group member. (The second student should be seated after the quote is read.) Allow enough time for the remainder of the class to identify the person who made the comment. When enough responses have been made, the student holding the “hand” should turn it around to show the picture—thereby verifying the identity of the person.

13. Continue this process until all comments are verified and photos are displayed.

14. Ask for two volunteers from the audience. They should arrange the 10 students in a line that best tells the story of the China Hands and the Chinese Civil War. All students who are John Service may be grouped together.

15. Have the volunteers tell the story of the China Hands and their experiences in China. They should emphasize the roles played by other U.S. diplomats and politicians.

16. Save the China “hands” for future use. Some could be displayed at test time or, at least, used for review.

Activity 3

1. Project this quote:

In Chungking, Mr. Service was a political officer of the Embassy. . . His job was to get every bit of information that he possibly could. . . He would see the foreign press people. He saw the Chinese press people. He saw anybody in any of the embassies or legations that were over there that were supposed to know anything. . . He went to the Kuomintang headquarters. . . he went to the Communist headquarters. He associated with everybody and anybody in Chungking that could give him information, and he pieced together this puzzle that we had constantly before us as to what was going on in China and he did a magnificent job at it.

Former Ambassador Clarence Gauss testifying in Washington, D.C.

Source: Esherick, Joseph W., ed., Introduction, *Lost Chance in China: The World War II Dispatches of John S. Service*, pp. xvi–xvii (New York: Random House, 1974), as quoted in Wikipedia

2. Ask students why Former Ambassador [to China] Gauss might have testified for John Service. What was happening in the early 1950s?

3. Additional questions:

- a. John Service and other China Hands were recalled to Washington, D.C. at the request of Ambassador Patrick Hurley. Why were the China Hands unacceptable to the Ambassador? Why, in later years, did he blame them for his lack of success in China?
- b. John Service endured additional threats to his career. He was accused of being a spy (research the Amerasia Incident). He was found guilty of being a Communist sympathizer during the McCarthy years. How did eagerness and honesty in the field (China) prove harmful to Service?
- c. How did Service get caught in a “perfect storm” that questioned his loyalty to his country? Look at the resources, *Timeline: WWII* and *Timeline: The Early Cold War* to determine what was happening during the late 1940s and early 1950s.

4. Project this quote:

"We have gathered to honor a group of Foreign Service officers—represented in the person of Jack Service—whom history has recognized as having been right. . . For having been right many of them were persecuted, dismissed or slowed or blocked in their careers, with whatever damage done to them personally outweighed by damage done to the Foreign Service of the United States."

Historian Barbara Tuchman

Source: *Foreign Service Journal*, March 1973.
Tuchman spoke at the American Foreign Service Association
“China Hands” luncheon, January 30, 1973

- a. Describe the occasion that took place in 1973.
- b. What does this say about the observations and decisions made by John Service and the other China Hands?

- c. For many of the China Hands, this acknowledgement came posthumously. Does this erase wrongs of the past? Would you feel vindicated?

Extension Activities:

1. Do additional research to find what happened to the China Hands after they left China.
2. Distribute copies of the *Map: China 1945*. Have students locate these places and relate to the story of U.S. diplomacy during the Chinese Civil War.
 - a. Yenan, Chungking, Peiping, Nanking, Canton, and Formosa. In parentheses, place the current *pinyin* names of these places.
 - b. Have students explain the relevancy of each location to the Civil War period in China. ■